

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

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AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMCONSUL MUNICH

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 5616

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, PO

SUBJ: PRAVDA, IZVESTIYA ON PORTUGAL

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1. PRAVDA AN IZVESTIYA COMMENTARIES ON PORTUGAL SEEM INTENT

ON STRADDLING TWO THEMES AS ELECTION DAY APPROACHES. FIRST, THE SOVIETS ARE TRYING TO CAST THEMSELVES AS THE TRUE SUPPORTERS OF DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL--PRESUMABLY WITH THE RELATED AIMS OF PREEMPTING WESTERN CALLS FOR FREE ELECTIONS AND OF ANSWERING WESTERN CHARGES OF SOVIET INTERFERENCE IN PORTUGUESE AFFAIRS. SECOND, THE SOVIETS ARE UNDERLINING THEIR SUPPORT FOR PORTUGAL'S "PROGRESSIVE" COURSE AS FULLY CONSISTENT WITH DETENTE. THIS LATTER THEME MAY BE INTENDED FOR AN INTERNAL AUDIENCE WHICH FEELS THAT THE USSR MAY BE PLACING DETENTE INTERESTS ABOVE THE INTERESTS OF THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT. BUT A MORE OMINOUS READING COULD BE THAT THEY ARE WARNING THE WEST--AND ASSURING LEFT-WING ELEMENTS IN PORTUGAL--THAT DETENTE WILL NOT DETER THEM FROM ASSISTING PORTUGAL'S LEFTWARD COURSE.

2. BOTH THEMES STAND OUT IN PRAVDA APRIL 20 COMMENTARY BY ITS CORRESPONDENT IN LISBON, YERMAKOV. THE COMMENTARY ATTACKS "REACTIONARY CIRCLES IN THE WEST" AND THE "RINGLEADERS OF NATO" FOR THEIR ATTEMPTS TO INTERFERE IN PORTUGUESE INTERNAL AFFAIRS. YERMAKOV IS ESPECIALLY SHARP AGAINST WESTERN EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS, WHOM HE ACCUSES OF FURTHERING THE CAUSE OF THE PORTUGUESE SOCIALIST PARTY THROUGH CONTRADICTIONS AND THROUGH WARNINGS TO GONCALVES ABOUT THE DANGER PRESENTED BY THE PCP. AS FOR THE USSR, YERMAKOV SAYS THAT "IT IS WELL KNOWN" THAT THE SOVIET UNION "HAS NOT INTERFERED AND DOES NOT INTEND TO INTERFERE" IN EITHER THE INTERNAL OR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS OF PORTUGAL AND "EVEN THE MORE SO" DOES NOT INTEND TO INFLUENCE THE AFFAIRS OF "ANY OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES."

3. YERMAKOV, CHANGING HIS AUDIENCE, ATTEMPTS TO KNOCK DOWN THE "CANARD" FLOATED BY THE FINANCIAL TIMES THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS IN GENERAL TAKEN A "GUARDED" POSITION REGARDING ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH PORTUGAL. YERMAKOV SCURRIES TO PROCLAIM THAT THE "SOVIET PEOPLE" HAVE "MANY TIMES" EXPRESSED THEIR SYMPATHY FOR THE NEW, DEMOCRATIC PORTUGAL AND THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S "PROGRESSIVE" COURSE.

4. IZVESTIYA APRIL 21 COMMENTARY (BY L. KAMYNIN) GIVES MORE EMPHASIS TO THE SUPPORT "OF THE SOVIET UNION" FOR "DEMOCRATIC
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PORTUGAL" THAN DOES THE PRAVDA PIECE. IN ADDITION, KAMYNIN EXPLICITLY DENIES THAT DETENTE CONSIDERATION COULD HAVE CAUSED THE SOVIET UNION TO CHANGE ITS BASIC POLICY OF SUPPORT FOR PROGRESSIVE FORCES IN PORTUGAL.
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